

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2011

The Honorable Peter King
Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Meehan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism & Intelligence
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman King and Chairman Meehan:

Thank you for holding the hearing of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence entitled "Hezbollah in Latin America – Implications for U.S. Homeland Security" on July 7, 2011.

As new members of the Committee, we found the hearing to be informative on Hezbollah's activities beyond Lebanon, an issue which does not receive a great deal of public attention. As Western New Yorkers, we found the testimony that Hezbollah has established a presence in Toronto, a city which lies just over 100 miles from Buffalo, to be of great concern.

Western New York is home to four international bridge crossings, the largest electricity producer in New York State, and the homegrown al-Qaeda terrorist cell, the Lackawanna Six. It sits along two Great Lakes which represent the largest fresh water supply in the world and is the center point of a 500 mile radius that includes approximately 55% of the U.S. population and 62% of the Canadian population. The growing presence of an organization like Hezbollah on our proverbial doorstep is reason for concern and merits further inquiry by the Committee.

We would like to respectfully request that the Committee hold a second hearing on this matter, and that we invite federal officials from the Departments of Homeland Security, State, Justice and Treasury, as you see fit. While the initial hearing brought these issues to light, the absence of federal authorities able to answer our questions was disappointing and we believe the Committee would benefit from their participation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,


Brian Higgins
Member of Congress


Kathleen Hochul
Member of Congress